



WITTGENSTEIN'S LINGUISTIC TURN ON MIND-BODY PROBLEM

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ABSTRACT

The paper proposes to discuss famous linguistic philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein's stand point of linguistic school. Wittgenstein brings a linguistic turn to the mind-body problem. According to Wittgenstein there is no reason to suppose a mind conceived of as a kind of inner monitor of brain activity. Being a linguistic philosopher, he suggests that the word "mind" can be explained through its different uses. Thus, the question "what is mind?" loses its importance.

On the other hand, Wittgenstein tries to explain the existence of mind in the physical world. He argues that mind is a part of this world and language. According to him the language belongs to the main centre of the world and it holds an important position in the universe. With the help of the language human beings express their every sense. Language is the mirror that reflects the world. Through language we express our feelings, experiences and thoughts. Language is itself the medium of thought. According to Wittgenstein mind ceases to be a substance and merges itself in the activities which is centered by language. These language-centered activities are called language games. In those language games, mental activities are also found. Mind and mental activities here become one. In this way mental representations merges with the linguistic representations and this is nothing but language games. The world which is being represented in the language now can be explained grammatically. In this way, Wittgenstein as a linguistic philosopher tries to make mind available in the world.

KEYWORDS: Linguistic Philosopher, Mind-Body Problem, Physical World, Language, Medium of Thought, Language Game

INTRODUCTION

The thesis also proposes to discuss **Wittgenstein's** stand point of linguistic school. Wittgenstein was one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century. Wittgenstein brings a linguistic turn to the mind-body problem. The famous Logical Positivist Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) says that "Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts". According to him Philosophy is elucidatory but not descriptive. The thesis actually aims to discuss about Wittgenstein's idea of the existence of mind in the physical world. By discussing this point it can be explored that what is the Wittgenstein's idea about mind and physicality. Here the attempt is positive. He argues that mind is a part of this world and language. Wittgenstein gives emphasize on the language. According to him the language belongs to the main centre of the world and it holds an important position in the universe. With the help of the language human beings express their every sense and it is a part of the organism of each and every human. Language is the mirror that reflects the world. Through language we express our feelings, experiences and thoughts. In the case of cognitive experience, we do not have to choose any language as the medium of representation of the world. Indeed, language is itself the medium of thought. According to Wittgenstein mind ceases to be a substance and merges itself in the activities which is centered by language. These language-centered activities are called language games. In those language games, mental activities are also found. Mind and mental activities here become one. In this way mental representations merges with

the linguistic representations and this is nothing but language games. The world which is being represented in the language now can be explained grammatically. In our worldly activities, the pictorial representation of the world is grammatically secured at the very place, where the language game lies.

Availability of Mind in The World: A Linguistic Approach:

Wittgenstein as a logical positivist wants to make mind available in the world. He tries to make mind as transparent as possible in the world of language itself. He argues that language is the shelter of mind and the world, in the sense that, language is the only way through which we can access to the mind and the world. Through this explanation Wittgenstein makes an attempt to establish mind as transparent as the worldly activities.

As mind belongs to the inner world and thought is paralinguistic, thus mind is an independent entity from the language. This idea of recognizing thought as an inner process of an individual distinguishes subjective realm of the mind from the body of man. This view says that mind is constituted by the inner mental process as distinguished from the bodily actions. Hence, it can be claimed that the store-house of the mental process is mind. As mind is established as the shelter of mental processes, thus consciousness becomes the innate nature of the mind. This aspect has been criticised by most of the materialist philosophers and they reject the inner concept of the mind.

Wittgenstein actually tries to explain that the concept of inner

mind arises as a result of some grammatical mistakes. Some misunderstandings of the language in which we talk about mental activities are the reason of these grammatical mistakes. We express our mental activities in the statements like 'I am in pain'. This statement is not descriptive statement like 'I have a pen'. The matter of the statement which expresses mental states is not the description of what is happening in the mind. Thus, the above discussed statements are not similar.

Wittgenstein claims that the concept which says that mind is inner, is based on a grammatical mistake. He says that, mind is real as a mental activity but not as a mental entity. According to Wittgenstein mind is real in the sense that we are already playing the language games involving mind. As a result of that those who does not admit mind as much at a fault as those who affirm the existence of mind. Same is in the case for world. Mind and world both go together in that language presupposes as real.

The question that arises now is- "How does Wittgenstein conceive the relation between mind and the world? According to Wittgenstein mind-body dualism is not necessary to think of the mind-world relation. He claims that there can be no relation between the two if mind and body are different. As the body belongs to the world the mind also belongs to the world. The mind is not something which is less related to the world than the body. Wittgenstein says, the body is the 'best picture of human soul' in that sense the body is its spontaneous expression but is not alien to the mind. Wittgenstein argues that the world is not alien to the mind as the mind requires the world and the bodies of its expression. Wittgenstein claims the mind being part of the world is most intimately connected with the world because without the world we cannot think of what mind is. According to him mind is the minded being, in other words it is the human being who has mind. Wittgenstein claims that we can say all mental phenomena are found in the human beings. The reason behind this is only human beings or those which are closer to the human beings can have mind. We can use the predicates of thinking, feeling, willing etc. only to the human beings. Whereas we cannot say that a goat thinks or a cow hopes. .

Wittgenstein in his '*Philosophical Investigations*' says that: 'Only of a living human being and what resembles (behaves like) a living human being can one say it has sensations; it sees; is blind; hears; is deaf; is conscious or unconscious'. He also remarks, 'We do indeed say of an inanimate thing that is in pain: when playing with dolls for example. But this use of the concept of pain is a secondary one. Imagine a case in which people ascribed pain only to inanimate things; pitied only dolls.'

Since, we can only say that what behaves like a living thing can be mentioned as conscious. Through this claim consciousness connects with life rather what manifests or expresses it but not with what constitutes life.

Consider the following remarks in the *Philosophical Investigations*:¹

"Understanding a word": a state. But a *mental* state? —

Depression, excitement, pain, are called mental states. Carry out a grammatical investigation as follows: we say

"He was depressed the whole day".

"He was in great excitement the whole day".

"He has been in continuous pain since yesterday". —

According to Wittgenstein, understanding is different from a mental state. Actually "mental state" has two meanings for Wittgenstein:

1. a state of consciousness, and (ii) a state of a mind/ brain mechanism. To understand the origin of these two meanings. We have to be clear about the problem of understanding. Wittgenstein proposes here another word, namely 'reading'. We all agree that 'reading' is a special conscious activity of mind". However, if we look at the processes that occur when one is reading, we can- not find any process which is the reading, and which can distinguish real reading from pretended reading. But there must be a difference between real reading and pretended reading. So, we have to look for the difference elsewhere. If there is no difference in what they [i.e., the person who is really reading and the one who is pretending to read] happen to be conscious of there must be one in the unconscious workings of their minds, or, again, in the brain. Thus, in the search for the essence of 'reading', we are inclined first to look into the consciousness and then into a hypothetical mind/brain mechanism.
2. The same tendency also exists in our attempt to get the essence of knowing and understanding. Here the question arises that, "Is 'knowing' means to know the alphabet or the multiplication table?" Or "Is what we can call "knowledge" a state of consciousness or a process — say a thought of something, or the like? If it will be said that knowing the ABC is a state of the mind. One is thinking of a state of a mental apparatus (perhaps of the brain) by means of which we explain the *manifestations* of that knowledge. Such a state is called a disposition. Wittgenstein claims that if a person says that knowing is a state of mind, and then he/she is thinking of a state of a mind/brain mechanism. Wittgenstein has shown that knowing is not a state of consciousness. According to him if knowledge is called a "state" it must be in the sense in which we speak of the state of a body or of a physical model. So, it must be in a physiological sense or in the sense used in a psychology that talks about unconscious states of a mind-model.

Wittgenstein claims that, understanding and knowledge of the language, is not a conscious state that accompanies the sentences of the language and also argues that the word "know" doesn't denote a state of consciousness i.e., the grammar of the word "know" is not the grammar of a "state of consciousness", but something different. He explains that if a person says that understanding or knowing is a state of mind he can only be thinking of a state of a mind/brain mechanism.

The above-mentioned analysis has made abundantly clear

that when Wittgenstein speaks of understanding or knowing as a mental state, he has two meanings in his mind: a state of consciousness and a state of a mind/brain mechanism. If we recall the Wittgenstein's investigation is a grammatical one, which is based on the use of words to see that understanding is not a state of consciousness, we must be clear about the grammars of "understand" and a "state of consciousness", and see that they are different.

Wittgenstein writes about this explicitly: "the grammar of the word 'know' isn't the grammar of a 'state of consciousness', but something different". The same should be true of "understand" and a 'state of consciousnesses.

According to Wittgenstein, "In order to get clearer about the grammar of the word "understand", let's ask: *when* do we understand a sentence? — When we've uttered the whole of it? Or while uttering it? — Is understanding, like the uttering of a sentence, an articulated process and does its articulation correspond exactly to that of the sentence? Or is it non-articulate, something accompanying the sentence in the way a pedal note accompanies a melody? How long does it take to understand a sentence? And if we understand a sentence for a whole hour, are we always starting afresh?"

Wittgenstein also calls understanding, knowing and the like "dispositions". The term is merely a label for Wittgenstein. He is not saying, after a careful grammatical investigation, that understanding, knowing, etc. are indeed dispositions. He is only giving the label "dispositions" to understanding, knowing, etc., for ease of expression.

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"Really one hardly ever says that one has believed, understood, intended something "uninterruptedly" since yesterday. An interruption of belief would be a period of unbelief, not e.g., the withdrawal of attention from what one believes—e.g., sleep."

According to Wittgenstein a sensation of pain is a state of consciousness, and believing and understanding are dispositions. So, it indicates that understanding and a state of consciousness are different in terms of interpretability. So far, we have seen some remarks by Wittgenstein on the differences between understanding and states of consciousness. Thus, we can conclude that Wittgenstein asks: Is understanding a mental state? But never says either that understanding is a mental state or that it is not.

CONCLUSION

Wittgenstein's account of understanding does not make clear what a state of a person is nor is it clear what one can get philosophically if understanding is taken to be a state of a person.

The reason behind this is that, the meaning of a "mental state" must be made clear in order for an answer to be given. Wittgenstein made a distinction between two meanings of a "mental state", i.e., a state of consciousness, and a state of a mind/brain mechanism. In this paper the discussions have been made about the question whether understanding is a state of a mind/brain mechanism or not?

If understanding is claimed to be a state of consciousness, then Wittgenstein's answer will deny this. He wants to solve this problem through a grammatical investigation of the words "understand" and a "state of consciousness". Here the grammars of these words have been investigated by him. In this paper, the discussions have been made to explain that according to Wittgenstein understanding is not a state of consciousness.

Actually, his motivation was to see that "understanding" and a "state of consciousness" are used differently from a number of different viewpoints. He reveals that the grammar of "understanding" is different from that of a "state of consciousness", and shows that understanding is not a state of consciousness.

Most of the philosophers are inclined to think that understanding is a mental process and that understanding is a state of consciousness.

Now the question arises that how does Wittgenstein justify his words? Actually, he claims that, here grammar comes to help. If we investigate the grammars of "understanding" and a "state of consciousness", it will be clear that understanding is neither a mental process nor a state of consciousness. Thus, according to Wittgenstein, the philosophers have made mistakes here. Wittgenstein claims that, the philosophers have been misled by the surface forms of language. They have been held captive by a certain false or misleading picture. The philosophers can recognize their mistakes and can realize that their attempt is futile; grammar must be reminded to them.

The thesis also aims to discuss the understanding of grammar, the most significant part of the later Wittgenstein's philosophy. Wittgenstein uses circumstantial rules to deal with the idea that sudden understanding is a mental process. Here he lets us consider the different processes which may take place when one suddenly understands a series and see that none of them can be identified with understanding. In fact, Wittgenstein makes use of various types of grammatical rules to face the problem of understanding as a state of consciousness. He uses such rules to show that the grammars of "understand" and a "state of consciousness" are different, and therefore that understanding is not a state of consciousness. He claims that, understanding and a state of consciousness have distinct features. We can really understand what Wittgenstein claims by "grammar" and "grammatical investigation" only by making clear what

grammatical rules Wittgenstein uses to dissolve concrete philosophical problems.

Here I am concluding that, through a grammatical investigation Wittgenstein tries to solve a philosophical problem. By investigating the grammars of “understand” and a “state of consciousness”, Wittgenstein dissolves the problem of understanding viewed as a state of consciousness.

Thus, Wittgenstein proves that understanding is not a state of consciousness and it is a grammatical illusion that understanding is such a state, an illusion engendered by a misapprehension of the grammars of “understand” and a “state of consciousness”.

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